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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3992

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 000850

STATE FOR EUR/NB, S/CT, DS/TIA/PII, DS/IP/WMD, DS/IP/EUR,
DS/ITA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ASEC PTER SW

SUBJECT: STOCKHOLM SWEDEN WHITE POWDER INCIDENT 12/17/2008

REF: STOCKHOLM DS SPOT REPORT OF 12/17/2008

¶1. (SBU) On December 17, 2008, local embassy staff (LES) managing the incoming mail notified ARSO that they had intercepted two suspicious envelopes addressed to the US Embassy Stockholm, one originating from Texas and the other from Sweden. Mail room staff had previously been notified of the incidents of other EUR posts receiving envelopes containing a white powder substance originating from Texas. Photographs provided from other posts were utilized to identify and isolate the two similar envelopes received in the incoming mail. The LES conducted the mail sort in hazmat gear to offset the chance of accidental exposure to a potentially hazardous material. The LES placed the two envelopes into plastic bags, secured them in the scanning bin, and notified the Local Security Force.

¶2. (SBU) Immediately thereafter, RSO office contacted local authorities and mobilized the First Responder Team who suited up in hazmat suits and proceeded to the mail facility to isolate the items and decontaminate the area. The two letters were isolated by the First Responder Team, photographed and sealed into transportation containers. The area and personnel were decontaminated, the transportation chambers were prepared for delivery to SMI (Swedish CDC), and the mail room was taped off until test results came back. All personnel exposed to the envelopes reported to the medical office and were evaluated. Local authorities transported the containers to SMI where testing would begin. ARSO kept the Charge informed throughout these procedures.

¶3. (SBU) On December 18, 2008, the Swedish police authorities informed ARSO that they had concluded that the powder substances discovered in both envelopes were non-threatening. The substances had not yet been identified, however, no bacteriological culture had developed during overnight testing and the powder was not identified as a hazardous material. Upon receiving this report, the mailroom was reopened.

¶4. (SBU) On December 19, 2008, the Swedish police authorities informed ARSO that the powder substance found in the envelope from Texas was identified as flour. The Swedish envelope contained only a small quantity of a non-threatening substance. The Swedish letter also had no return address or postal system markings on it although it did have postage. Post is currently awaiting the return of both envelopes to their custody so that they may be forwarded for further analysis and investigation.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: This incident was handled quickly and efficiently as a result of well-trained responders and the benefit of knowledge of incidents occurring throughout EUR. The envelopes were isolated and prepared for transportation within half an hour of being identified and no staff were unintentionally exposed to any potentially hazardous materials. The post-to-post communication regarding this incident allowed the RSO shop to be proactive as opposed to reactive in how it addressed the threat. The result was a rapid and coordinated response with timely containment and minimal interruption to post business.

¶6. (U) Point of contact for this matter is ARSO James

Guanci, 46-8-783-5507.

SILVERMAN